

Resurrection Sunday - April 4th, 2010 – Matthew 28:1-20

Matthew 28:1-15 1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. 5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." 8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." 11 While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. 12 When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, 13 telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' 14 If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." 15 So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day. 16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." NIV

The story is told about how that after a hardy Texas rain storm filled all the pot holes in the streets and alleys, a young mother watched her two little boys playing in the puddle through her kitchen window. The older of the two, a five year old lad, grabbed his sibling by the back of his head and shoved his face into the water hole. As the boy recovered and stood laughing and dripping, the mother runs to the yard in a panic. "Why on earth did you do that to your little brother?" she said as she shook the older boy in anger. "We were just playing church, mommy," he said. "I was baptizing him in the name of the Father, the Son and in the 'hole-he-goes.'"

- Be that as it may, and suffice it to say, when it comes to the innocence of a child, there's, honesty, humility, and simplicity.
- Over the years, I've been slowly coming to the conclusion that the resurrection message is one that is very child like simple.
- Just as Jesus came into the world as a child, so too do we come to Jesus as a child, with a childlike trust and a childlike faith.

Matthew 18:1-5 1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. KJV

- Even here in Matthew's Gospel there's a marvelous simplicity beginning with the birth of Jesus, ending with the resurrection of Jesus.

Matthew 1-10	Jesus revealed
Matthew 11-13	Jesus resisted
Matthew 14-20	Jesus retreated
Matthew 21-27	Jesus rejected
Matthew 28	Jesus resurrected

- I would like for us to look at two observations as it relates to the resurrection of Jesus Christ on that Sunday morning 2,000 years ago.

- **Observation #1:** "The resurrection of Jesus was supremely for us." Jesus became like us, died instead of us, and rose again for us.
- This is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions, it's not what man does for God, it's what God has already done for man.
- Easter is celebrated as a "religious" holiday, yet God did what He did for us, so as to reunite us, because sin separated Him from us.

- By way of illustration, there's a simple graphic that communicates a simple message called; "the Gospel," which means "Good News!"
- In the beginning, God and man were together, but through Adam sin entered the world and separated man from God. (Bad News!)
- Because sin entered the world through Adam, Jesus entered into the world as the second Adam to die for and pay for our sin.
- The finished work of the cross, and the resurrection of the Christ, bridged the gap, and thus reunited man to God.
- It is for this reason, that the Christian faith is the truth, and all other religions are false because man has to reach God.

Former Attorney General of the United States of America, John Ashcroft said it well: "Islam is a religion in which a god requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which the true God sent His Son to die for you."

- **Observation #2:** Since the resurrection of Jesus was for us, the onus is on us, in how we respond to that which Jesus did instead of us.
- What I find fascinating about Matthew's resurrection account is that he records some interesting details about everyone's reaction.
- If you look closely at the way they respond to and even react to the resurrection you will see why it is that some believe and some don't.

- Like Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, some will come to "take a look," because they are earnestly searching their Lord.
- Like the Roman guards, some will become afraid of coming to the Lord.
- Like Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, some will "go quickly and tell" the others about the Lord.
- Like the Chief Priests and elders, some will deceive because they don't believe in the Lord.
- Like the disciples who, "when they saw Him," some will "worship the Lord."
- Like some of them, even when they see Him, some will doubt the Lord.
- Like the disciples who received the great commission, some will "go and make disciples in the name of the Lord."

- Perhaps I can simplify these responses by categorizing them in the following way:

1. Some are seekers
2. Some are doubters
3. Some are worshippers
4. Some are believers
5. Some are deceivers
6. Some are disciple makers

- It would behoove each and every one of us to ask ourselves; "which one best represents me?"

- If you're a seeker I want to encourage you to stop searching and get going! That's what the Angel tells Mary who is searching for Jesus.
v5-6 The angel tells Mary to not be afraid, and, that though she's looking for Jesus, He's not here, but has risen, just as He said.
v7 He tells her, in effect, to stop looking and "go quickly" on ahead into Galilee and tell the disciples that He's risen, then she'll see Him.
- There's a similar incident in the Old Testament when God basically tells Moses to stop praying and get moving. (Exodus 14:15-16)

Exodus 14:15-16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. 16 Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

- In other words, sometimes seeking and even praying can actually become an excuse for inaction. One called it the "analysis paralysis."
- See, Moses had to take action and lift up his rod in order for God to meet him there, as it were, and do the miracle.
- It's been said that; "God can't move a parked car, so get it in gear!" (The true story of "moving a parked car.")

James 2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Hebrews 4:2 For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

K.P. Yohannan in "Living by Faith not by Sight" illustrated it beautifully this way; "...There's a chemistry to take place. For example, when hydrogen is mixed with oxygen in the presence of heat, a chemical reaction takes place and water is produced. Two separate elements, when combined, yield an entirely different result than if they were never mixed. This is true in life as well. There's a chemistry that needs to occur in our lives in what we see, hear and know being mixed with faith. You may have needs or promises from God, but if they are never mixed or combined with the element of faith, you will never see the reaction take place to bring those to fruition.

- So what do I need to do then? First, you need to combine your faith with God's grace.

Ephesians 2:8-10 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. NIV

Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9-10 ...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Luke 22:14-21 14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." 17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. NIV